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PRODUCTION

ANNOUNCER

ENGINEER

REMARKS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

1. ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers!

2. MUSIC: THEME

3. ANNOUNCER: Forests and People, the 1941 Report of the Forest Service, makes

4. a statement I'd like to pass on to you... It says: "We have

5. learned that forests are not inexhaustible... And yet, today,

6. most operators of forest lands in the United States still cling

7. to destructive practices. These practices are unnecessary

8. because if forests are cropped instead of mined, they can renew

9. themselves. They can produce continuous supplies of raw

10. materials. They can be permanent sources for productive

11. employment." ... So says the Report, Forests and People, and in

12. between the lines we see this solid fact made clear: Forests

13. contribute to the strength and security of our Nation. We

14. must keep our forests productive, in war and in peace!... Now,

15. once again, to the Pine Cone National Forest. It's a blustery

16. March night and, within the Ranger Station, a glowing fire

17. lights up the faces of Ranger Jim Robbins, and Bess, and Jim's

18. assistant Jerry Quick as they listen to Mary Halloway tell

19. about the latest shenanigans of some of her pupils in the local

20. school. Here they are:

21. ALL LAUGH IN

22. JERRY: Boy, I can just see those kids!

23. MARY: Yes, they had mud all over the, mud from head to foot. I

24. wanted to laugh but I had to appear righteously indignant of

25. course.

1. BESS: Of course you did.

2. JIM: (CHUCKLES) So they were playin' soldier, huh?

3. MARY: Yes. On their way to school they got to playing that an enemy

4. was lurking in that field next to the schoolhouse... It's the

5. field that's been plowed for our use as a school war garden

6. later this Spring. Right now it's as muddy as muddy can be.

7. JIM: Yeah. I s'pose they captured the enemy all right? Mud and all.

8. BESS: What in the world did you do with them, Mary?

9. MARY: I sent all five of them right back to their homes. Their

10. respective mammas and daddies can handle whatever discipline

11. is necessary.

12. JIM: Maybe the kids figured that mud would make a good camouflage.

13. JERRY: Say, talking about camouflage. Did you folks read that story

14. in the paper the other day about the Japanese sniper up in

15. a tree? Out there in the Philippines, I think it was.

16. BESS: I think I read about it. He was painted green, wasn't he?

17. HERRY: Yeah. He'd painted his face and hands green, and his shoes too,

18. and he had on a green uniform.

19. BESS: So he's look like part of the tree, I suppose.

20. JIM: Well, I reckon our counter-snipers got 'im just the same.

21. JERRY: Iea, they got him all right. But he sure was camouflaged to

22. look like a tree, all right.

23. JIM: (CHUCKLES) Sorta reminds me of the time I tried to look like

24. a corn stalk.

25.

1. BESS: Like a cornstalk? When was that, Jim? I don't believe you
2. ever told me about that.
3. JIM: Well, this was a long time ago, Bess. It was when I was in
4. charge of that ranger district down South. Say, by George, it
5. was just about this time of year, too. Yep. It was in March.
6. Early March. Fire season was on.
7. JERRY: Yeah, this is the time forest fires go to poppin' in the South.
8. JIM: Right. I sure hope folks in and around the woods down South
9. are mighty fire conscious these days. They should be 'cause,
10. the way I look at it, every forest fire or woods fire these
11. days is like patting Hitler on the back, whether it's intended
12. that way or not. That's part of Hitlerism, you know, breakin'
13. down a nation by breakin' down its resources.
14. BESS: You started to tell us about the time you used camouflage, Jim.
15. MARY: Yes, what is the story, Mr. Robbins?
16. JIM: Oh yes. Well, like I said, I was in charge of this southern
17. forest. Worst fire trap I ever got into. All kinds of burnin'
18. goin' on, for all kinds of unreasonable reasons, but all doin'
19. a whale of a lot of damage. My biggest job, when I was sent
20. there, was to try and stop those woods fires.
21. JERRY: Fire-eatin' Robbins, he was known as in them days!
22. MARY: Hush, Jerry.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.

1. JIM: Well, I was new to the country of course, but I had a jim-dandy
 2. forest guard around that knew the folks and the country. His
 3. name was Tom . . . Tom Stanley, a local boy with the love of
 4. the woods in his heart. One day when I was 'specially down in
 5. the mouth, 'cause I'd had a string of fires and no luck in
 6. catchin' up with whoever was doing the setting, Tom came to me
 7. (FADE FOR FLASHBACK) and said, "Listen, Mister Jim" . . .
 8. (PAUSE)
 9. TOM: (FADING IN) Mister Jim, listen. There's one guy in particular
 10. who's giving us all this fire trouble. I know that's so,
 11. sure's I'm alive.
 12. JIM: Who is it, Tom? And how come you're so sure?
 13. TOM: It's Matt Hudgins, Mister Jim. He's given us trouble ever since
 14. this National Forest started here.
 15. JIM: Matt Hudgins, huh? Down there in the hot spot, the southeast
 16. corner.
 17. TOM: Yeah. I figger, Mister Jim, if we can just hook on to old
 18. Matt, right when he's settin' a fire, we'll come mighty close
 19. to stoppin' all the woods burnin' that's goin' on in this
 20. district. But he's mighty slick, old Matt is.
 21. JIM: Why does he set out woods fires, Tom?
 22. TOM: Well, I reckon it's mostly from habit now or maybe he just wants
 23. to pester us. I recollect though that he's always argued
 24. that a good spring fire greens up the grass an' kills the
 25. ticks and the like.

1. JIM: Actually, though, the fires kill the good, nourishing grass
 2. sprouts and drive out a lot of good insects that help a man.
 3. Maybe if I talked to Matt Hudgins, maybe I could convince him.
 4. TOM: Nope. We've tried that, many a time. It won't work, Mister
 5. Jim. Oh, he listens good but it goes in one ear and out
 6. t'other. Nope. We've got to catch that rascal settin' a fire.
 7. That's the only way we can cure 'im.
 8. JIM: There's some plan buzzin' through that head of yours, Tom.
 9. What yuh got in mind?
 10. TOM: Well, this isn't goin' to be so easy. But it's worth a try.
 11. I figure.
 12. JIM: I don't care how tough a job it is if we can just put a stop
 13. to these woods fires, Tom.
 14. TOM: It may mean stayin' out most the night and just lyin' still.
 15. Mister Jim. And these nights are mighty cold about now.
 16. JIM: What's your plan?
 17. TOM: Well, I got wind of somethin' that sounds like the real stuff.
 18. A feller told me he heard old Matt braggin' as how he was goin'
 19. to set one off in the woods next to his place pretty quick,
 20. first windy mornin' came along.
 21. JIM: The woods he's speakin' about are Uncle Sam's.
 22. TOM: Yesh. I was afraid he'd pick out this mornin' the way the
 23. wind'd been. But he didn't and it seems to me, this wind's
 24. goin' to stay with us a spell.
 25. JIM: Then there's a good chance he might set a fire tomorrow
 morning?

1. TOM: Yesp. A good chance, I'd say. Now here's my idea, see? Old
2. Matt's place is right alongside the government land. I kinda
3. figure that if we can hide out some way durin' the night ...
4. if we could get close without Matt's hounds hearin' us, we
5. could ...

6. JIM: We'll do it, Tom ... (FADE) We'll start tonight ...

7. (PAUSE)

8. (VOICES ARE MUFFLED THROUGHOUT FOLLOWING)

9. JIM: (FADE IN) How you standin' it, Tom? It's not long 'fore
10. daybreak.

11. TOM: It's kinda cold, ain't it?

12. JIM: I was just thinkin' it was lucky for us the wind's been
13. blowing away from Hudgin's house. Those hounds of his haven't
14. stirred a bit.

15. TOM: I got to hand it to yuh, Mister Jim. Slippin' into these corn
16. shocks was somethin', I don't mind tellin' you. If old Matt
17. wasn't so confounded lazy he wouldn't a left this corn stacked
18. up here all this time.

19. JIM: Yeah. It was a break for us, all right. I don't reckon
20. anybody can see us all covered up with cornstalks like this.

21. TOM: I sure hope not, 'cause sure as shootin', Matt's gonna be
22. lookin' around to make sure nobody's hidin' in the woods,
23. pryin' on 'im.

24. JIM: Guilty folks are always more suspicious than honest folks.

25.

1. TOM: Well, if he's gonna do it, I'm prayin' old Matt'll do his
 2. meanness this mornin' ... Br-r-r, it's sure 'nough cold here,
 3. with that wind a-blowin' down her collar.

4. JIM: Not so loud, Tom! The sun's comin' up.

5. TOM: Hey! I just thought of somethin'. What if Hudgins doesn't
 6. act up for us? What if old Matt just spends the day sittin' in
 7. front of his place, like he usually does? What we goin' to do
 8. then, Mister Jim, with us right here at the edge of the woods
 9. where he could see us if we moved?

10. JIM: (DRILY) Nothing we can do, I reckon, except keep on standin'
 11. here 'til we can make a break for it.

12. TOM: Good gravy, that ain't so funny. We might have to stand here
 13. all day.

14. JIM: Yeah, I've been thinkin' about that. Maybe I'm not so smart
 15. after all.

16. TOM: Look! There's old Matt, Mister Jim, comin' out of his door.

17. JIM: Yeah, I see him. He's lookin' right this way, too.

18. TOM: You reckon we're not covered up so good after all?

19. JIM: No. We're all right. He's lookin' past us, up at the woods.
 20. Here he comes!

21. TOM: No. He's cuttin' away from us, up into the woods. Yep. That's
 22. what he's doin'. He's makin' sure nobody's hidin' out. Golly,
 23. he's sure actin' suspicious, ain't he?

24. JIM: Quiet, Tom. He's comin' back this way. Look at him. He's
 25. standin' there at the edge of the woods. Looking every which
 way.

1. TOM: He's goin' to do it, Mister Jim! He's goin' to do it! That's
2. a box of matches he just took outa his back pocket. Let's
3. get him.

4. JIM: No. Wait a minute, Tom. Let him set his fire. We got to
5. catch him at the act. We'll be able to stomp it out 'fore it
6. goes to spreading.

7. TOM: Well, that rascal! See there, he's gatherin' a handful of
8. pine straw so's he can spread the doggoned fire every which way.
9. There he goes. Strikin' a match. He's settin' the grass
10. afire, Mister Jim! He's settin' 'er afire!

11. JIM: Let's go, Tom. (RUSTLE OF CORNSTALKS THROWN ASIDE) Get that
12. layer of cornstalks off you. (SHOUTS) All right, Mister
13. Hudgins. You can stop right there! We got you dead to rights.
14. (FADE) You'll not be settin' no more fires

15. ALL AD LIB IN

16. JERRY: Whew! And you got him, dead to rights, huh Jim.

17. MARY: (LAUGHING) You and Tom must have looked funny with that corn
18. all over you, Mr. Robbins.

19. JIM: Mister Judgins couldn't see anything humorous about it, Mary.

20. BESS: What happened, finally, Jim? Did you take him to court?

21. JIM: Yes, Bess. And the Judge sure socked it to old Mat Hudgins.
22. He didn't set any more fires, I can tell you that.

23. JERRY: And the fire situation cooled off?

24.

25.

1. JIM: Yes, Jerry. Matt Hudgins' case impressed all the folks
2. around. And in time they began to realize that woods fires
3. take something out of the life and heart of a community.
4. Something that's mighty hard to replace!
5. MUSICAL FINALE
6. ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers comes to you each week during the
7. Farm and Home Hour with the cooperation of the Forest Service,
8. United States Department of Agriculture.
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Yes, Jerry. Matt Higgins' case impressed all the folks around. And in time they began to realize that woods fires take something out of the life and heart of a community. Something that's mighty hard to replace!

MUSICAL FINALE

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